

141

THE

CHARACTERS of the AGE;

OR THE

MODERN ENGLISHMAN.

A

S A T I R E.

*Arise, ye Criticks! vent your loudest Rage,
Let Poignant Satire Lash the Venal Age;
E'er Truth and Reason lose their just Command,
Call Virtue down to save a sinking LAND.*



140

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CHARACTERS of the AGE;

OR THE

MODERN ENGLISHMAN.

AS A T I R E.

Call Virtue down to save a sinking Land.
Ever Truth and Reason lose their just Command,
Let Polymat Savine Land the Vernal Age;
Kiss ye Critics! vent your loud Rage



140



T H E
MODERN ENGLISHMAN.
A
S A T I R E.

WHEN Luxury and Lust cou'd once enslave,
No more the GREEK was strong, or ROMAN brave;
No longer glow'd their Youth with martial Fire;
Science, and Art, did like their Fame expire;
Neglected Bards with loud Resentment saw
Vice set at large, and Virtue kept in awe;
ASTREA from the lov'd Abodes withdrew;
MINERVA sigh'd, and bade her ROME adieu;
Forc'd from those Climes she fled to find retreat,
And soon in ancient ALBION fix'd her Seat;
On LATIUM Shores, where late her Glories shone,
Left the fall'n ROMAN ravag'd and undone:
When she with us assum'd her awful Throne,
Dictated Laws, and made her Precepts known,
Virtue was then the BRITONS sacred Trust,
And their chief Glory to be brave and just!

When wide Despotic Realms of vast extent,
 Whose guarded Bulwarks fill'd the Continent,
 Durst urge their Wrath, the Menace they defy'd,
 Mock'd all their Schemes, and quickly curb'd their Pride;
 If NEPTUNE shook his Trident o'er the Main,
 Nations were hush'd, and Rumour sunk again!

Say, Satire, now what is GREAT-BRITAIN'S Fame,
 Smiles she beneath a mild pacific Reign?
 Say if from distant Worlds she heaps her Store,
 And spreads her Influence, Grandeur, Wealth and Power;
 To what new Excellences we arrive,
 How Science, Learning, Arts, Industry thrive;
 If Charity does party Feuds remove,
 And Zealots live in Unity and Love;
 If pure Religion is by all confess'd,
 And hospitable Greatness much increas'd;
 If each, secure, beneath his Vine, at Ease,
 Sees Discord calm'd to Harmony and Peace:
 Say, if these Virtues shall the Age renown,
 When Fame hereafter hands our Story down
 To following Generations as they rise,
 Lear'd by their Fathers to be *Good* and *Wise*,
 Whose Trophies then shall stand the Shock of Time,
 And sacred in eternal Annals shine:
 Delightful View! is this the noble End
 To which GREAT-BRITAIN'S busy Motions tend?
 Vain pleasing Thought! vain soft illusive Dream!
 How chang'd the Subject, how reverse the Theme!

Fain wou'd I speak my Country's loud Applause,
 But angry Truth proclaims her injur'd Cause.
 Hard Fate! must this become the Muses Choice,
 A Nation fill'd with Folly, Fraud, and Vice — ?
 It must be so — then great APOLLO deign
 To aid my Thoughts thro' this poetic Spleen!
 Contagious Ills spread dire Disease around;
 Search! search the Cause! deep probe the fatal Wound:
 Assist, e'er fainting Reason bid adieu
 To *Morals, Conscience, and Religion too!*

All Parties raise a loud Domestic War,
 And all for Publick Good alike declare:
 For this their Works of Charity we find
 So Noble, Free, Benevolent, and Kind,
 That often Thousands are *per Diem* spent,
 To give Relief,* and sooth harsh Discontent.
 Which, to promote this pious Deed the more,
 Finds *fails* for Bankrupts, *Bridewells* for the Poor:
 Their Characters are so exceeding nice,
 Either they have no Virtue or no Vice:
 And each maintains (tho' wrangl'd ne'er so long)
 Their Schemes are Right, the others always Wrong:
 Such knotty Doubts what Reasoning can comprise;
 How shall we come at Truth in such Disguise?
 Do their Designs, with all this noisy Zeal,
 Advance the Service of the Common-Weal!

* It is suppos'd, the Author means to give Relief to those who deposit the Sums, by which they gain their Designs, and make those easy who oppose them; which often incapacitates the former to pay their lawful Debts, and occasions their Creditors to become Bankrupts, &c.

All to that Motive eagerly pretend,
 What'er their Project is, their View, or End:
 But this a nobler Confirmation needs,
 Let them exchange their *Words* for manly *Deeds*;
 Words pass away invisible as Wind;
 'Tis Deeds reveal the Purpose of the Mind:
 This is a Truth by long Experience found,
An empty Vessel makes the loudest Sound!
 And subtle Tongues so palliate *Good and Evil*,
A Saint in Words may be in Deeds a D—il.
 By flagrant Instance it appears too plain,
 That oft as Interest changes, so does Man;
 If that's obtain'd, no Matter Wrong or Right,
 What's false i'th' Morning may be true at Night,
 Int'rest the Secrets of the Soul unlocks,
 This clears all Doubt, and solves the Paradox;
 Here Fools deceive, and Knaves conceal their Crimes,
 So *R—* extol'd, and *H—* damn'd the Times;
 Both Patriots too! then how came this about?
 Why *R—* was then in Pay, and *H—* out?
 But see, three wavering Moons are scarcely gone,
 E'er *R—* cries out the Nation is undone!
 What can have alter'd thus these stedfast Men?
 Why *R—* is out at *C—*, and *H—* in.
 We all at Bri—ry and Cor—tion rail,
 Blame him that purchas'd what we put to Sale.
 If Men for Gold will barter all they have,
 Who sells his Right is justly made a Slave:
 Why shou'd a B—gh of the Choice repent,
 Which does so well its B—rs represent?

Their Privileges were by Auction bought,
 Put up to Shew, and sold again by Lot :
 'Tis all Plain-dealing then, if this be true,
 We cannot sell a Claim, and keep it too.
 Yet thus imbroil'd contending Tumults brawl,
And Publick Good's the specious Term for all.
 Virtue alone deserves a Nation's Trust,
 Without it all are faithless and unjust :
 Some Secret View the conscious Thoughts suggest,
 Some selfish Minion Passion rules the Breast :
 Can any be for Arguments believ'd,
 Who have already all Mankind deceiv'd !
 Dare laugh at Morals, call all Virtue Whim ;
 Pray what's the Good of other Men to them ?
 But nothing now can give the World Offence,
 Like honest Truth and modest Innocence ;
 This knowing Age walks by politer Rules,
 And leaves such childish Thoughts to Boys and Fools !
 Coxcombs and Knaves no more their Guilt restrain,
 Insulting, Proud, Impertinent, and Vain ;
 Folly or Fraud is their eternal Boast,
 Most hating those that truly Merit most ;
 Disdaining all for Sense and Virtue known,
 (Talents so widely differing from their own)
 Left out of Mode, their Conduct should offend,
 And forfeit all their Impudence has gain'd.
 Ah ! Candour, Reason, state the Matter clear !
 Where is the Man unbias'd and sincere ?
 There are whose Breasts conceal no base Design,
 Yet Men of Worth in Court and State shine.

Yet Multitudes produce a scatter'd Few
Just to their K—g, and to their Country true.

Weak Muse forbear! content with humble Fate,
To Law and Schoolmen leave thou all that's Great;
Let favour'd BARDS assume their awful Sway,
Detect, reform, and lash our Crimes away.
Enough for thee, canst thou attempt to shew
Th' Extravagance to which our Follies grow;
How, when transplanted from a foreign Soil,
They Spread, and Flourish, in this fruitful Isle!
Rouze, honest Satire! scourge a guilty Land,
But touch on Persons with a tender Hand:
The reigning Foible of the Times explode,
This Thing call'd TASTE, this new fam'd ALAMODE!
This Term for something that was never found,
Which leaves our Sense and Reason lost in SOUND.
Without reserve impartial Justice show,
If guilty prov'd, what matter is it who?
Vice bears an equal Blame in Friend or Foe.

What brings in numerous Crouds the glittering Train!
Why all Absurd, Ridiculous, and Vain!
A friz'd Monfieur, or squeaking Strollers come
To laugh at us, from NAPLES, FRANCE, and ROME!
Our Wealth each foreign Nonsense has endow'd,
Each *Raree-shew* delights the gaping Croud;
For every Price they've something always Suits,
From *Fa—li* down to * *Merry-mouts*:

* An outlandish Creature so call'd by the Vulgar.

Consult but Reason, ALAMODE's at stake ;
 With the Polite what Havock wou'd it make !
 Nothing's so Dangerous, nothing so Uncouth,
To that Fine TASTE, as Virtue, Sense, and Truth ;
 All which Ambition bids the World forsake ;
 Who wou'd not shine a Novice or a Rake,
 A Fop, a Pimp, a Mimic or Buffoon,
 A Cook, a Coachman, Jockey or a Groom ;
 Which by the second *Climacteric* Year,
 First raise the Grandeur of a minor P—r ?
 Soon as he has Capacities for more,
 He takes some Dogs, a T—r, and a W—re :
 Will travel next, and learns by TWENTY-ONE
 The most accomplish'd Ways to be undone ;
 Which, with himself, (to shew his publick Care)
 He very largely lets the Nation share.
 But these are dirty Drudgeries ! they'll not do,—
 For one that prattles *French*, and is a BEAU !
 This gaudy Silkworm has enrich'd his Mind
 With softer Passions, Notions more refin'd ;
 Has Powder, Engines, and the D—l knows what,
 Scents, Paints, Complexions, Washes, Bergamot ;
 'Midst these soft Delicacies, Chat, and Tea,
 Tenderly melts his gentle Age away ;
 Who Gaily shines thro' Life's abortive Span,
 By Art an Insect, and by Nature Man.
 If Transmigration of the Soul were true,
 There's Transmigration sure of Bodies too ;
 Nor need we here PYTHAGORAS's Brain
 In doubtful Terms the System to explain,

By each mechanic Artift from Abroad,
 Chang'd into all the various Forms of Mode!
 No more Sir FOPLING fears to be disgrac'd,
Baboons and *Affes* first were Men of TASTE;
 Exactly each the same Endowments fit,
 Alike in Fiz, in Action, and in Wit.

To Ages past (would Fate return them here)
 What strange new-fashion'd Things should we appear!
 Their old Estates how they'd regret to see
 Lie mortgag'd now to FRANCE and ITALY!
 For Baubles, Toys, and all the foreign Trades
 Of Operas, Balls, Ridottos, Masquerades;
 Cooks, Tumblers, Dancers, Taylors, Politicians,
 Hair-frizzers, Eunuchs, *Frenchmen* and Musicians:
 Those manour Seats, where, feasting round the Year,
 Once friendly Neighbours quaff'd *October* Beer,
 Left desolate like some dead Hermit's Cell,
 Abandon'd Walls where Bats and Owlets dwell;
 Poor needy Duns the lonely Mansion fly,
 In Hutts, or Prisons, left to Starve and Die;
 Whilst Farms resound the broken Tenants Moan,
 The Orphans cries, and Labourers dismal Groan.
 How wou'd this Conduct of our spendthrift 'Squires
 Provoke the Vengeance of their hoary Sires!

Say, Satire, now, by what our Parts are shewn,
How fond of every People but our own;
 How Foreigners at first Address appear,
 How they're Receiv'd, and what their Business here.

Up steps *Monsieur* — *Ab! Comment portez vous,*
 With thread-bare * Rug, no Shirt, and soleless Shoe;
 To greasy Flannels pins his *ruff'd* † *Shams*;
 Has Congees, Capers, and a thousand Flams:
 With *English* P—rs behold the Coxcomb set,
 Deem'd a Companion for the Coronet!
 First glaring Pattern of the Mode he shines,
 Author of *Taste*, and Modeller of Times.
 For what, pray (Sirs) can all this Fondness be?
 'Cause he's caress'd by most N—ty;
 And those who scarce can purchase Bed and Board
 Affect the Elegancy of a Lord.
 Each Genius then he well observes, to find,
 If most to Fop, or Epicure inclin'd;
 How e'er that prove, in Air, Grimace and Dress,
 We soon excel, and mimic to Excess!
 When strait a chief *de*—something, next comes o'er,
 With *Words* and *Trifles* never known before;
 Who finds us in the || various-colour'd Robe,
 And tells us every Bubble is a Globe;
 Where, willingly deceiv'd, we think we see
 A World of Wonders in Epitome!
So gull'd of Treasure, Honesty, and Sense,
He rules our Reason as he rules our Pence.
 Such Madness reigns thro' each revolving Moon,
 And Britons emulate the *French* Buffoon.

* His Coat, suppos'd to be a coarse *French* Cloth which they usually first appear in.

† A Term for *Holland* Sleeves, made in the Fashion of Shirt-Sleeves.

|| 'Tis suppos'd the Author means a Fool's-Coat, alluding to the Infatuation of our Reason by ridiculous Extravagancy.

Oaths, Clamour, Nonsense, Blasphemy, aloud,
 Proclaim the Age one vain Atheistic Croud!
 Whose dreadful Van illustrious Heroes grace,
 Renown'd for Powder, Perri-wiggs, and Lace;
 Whilst AMAZONS, Perfumes and Fluids taint,
 Their Dresses Foreign, and their Faces Paint.
 Shun this ye boasted Glory of our Isle!
 Nor veil your Beauties with that hated Foile,
 Wit, Shape, and Air, still conquer where ye come,
 And awful shine in Love's soft tinctur'd Bloom!
 What can ye add to Nature's finish'd Hand?
 What can your Charms—but Conquer and Command?

In swelling Sounds extensive Folly grows,
 Who now the Value of a *Quaverer* knows?
 (*Tho it's the same, say but he comes from ROME,*
Were he an Idiot with a whistle Spoon.)
 Lo! throngs of Females, big with Eunuchs Song,
 Leading Mankind like tattling Babes along.
 See *F—li* from the Stage retire!
 Bright Splendors fade, and dying Nymphs expire!
 “ *Lov'd Far—li! quickly him restore,*
 “ *Come chanting Angel whom we all adore;*
 “ *Sweet SENESINO is already gone,*
 “ *If thou art lost three Kingdoms are undone!*”
 Thus the Coquet, the Prude, the Belle, the Beau,
 In sad Dispair express their mingled Woe;
 To any Terms how gladly they'd comply,
 That Fame might purchase, or their Wealth cou'd buy!

Quickly,

(III)

Quickly, O quickly! welcome Breezes bring
The pretty harmless soft melodious Thing!
Fly! Warbler, fly the torrid Climes of SPAIN,
And let the Fair enjoy their own again;
The hated Kingdom leave that forc'd thee hence:
Inhuman Guilt! O matchless Insolence——!
Vain Thought——! Redress can Mer——ts hope to see,
When that proud Court durst make a Prize of thee!

Arise, ye Criticks! vent your loudest Rage,
Let poignant Satire lash the venal Age;
E'er Truth and Reason lose their just Command,
Call Virtue down to save a sinking Land;
And let it be by Truth and Valour shewn,
We've something left us yet that is our own.
Ill suit these dear-bought Customs, brought from far,
With Great BRITANNIA's awful Character!
Where's now her glorious Fame of Strong, and Brave,
Always employ'd to Conquer, and to Save?
Behold! her Power to Folly sacrific'd,
By those vain People, whom she once despis'd:
Meanly her weak degenerate Offspring stoops
To ape their Fashions, and to lap their Soupes.

Whores, Bawds, and Pimps are thought the true Foundation
Whereon to build the Nation's Reformation;
If so, what vast Improvement is at hand,
Ours soon will be a meek repenting Land!
Kind Females hear! make the good Work your Choice,
And wake us from this Lethargy of Vice:

Behold the Country's darling Sons are brought
 Politeness, Sense, and Morals to be taught;
 Hither the rural 'Squire reserv'd and plain,
 The fullen Pedant big with pregnant Brain,
 The carlish Lout that chanc'd to be an Heir,
 And Young Mechanic instantly repair;
 The first for Manners comes to view the Town,
 The next to shew his Parts, or claim the Gown;
 Politer Terms disturb the others Pate,
Genteely how to spend a good Estate!
 The Tradesman's Fate may curse him too with Wealth;
 Then all must have Diversions,—how, for Health?
 No, more refin'd, they scorn such rustic Schemes,
 New Mode, and Taste, each Pupil now esteems;
 For these they search the City, Town, and Court,
 To Church, to Play-house, and to Stews resort;
 With grand assuming Look, and rakeish Air,
 Soon learn to Drink, to Bully, Lye, and Swear;
 Then a tame Pimp, a Wife, a Brace of Whores,
 Debts, P—xes, Duns, Debauches, and Amours,
 A Foreigner, of *Bugs and Beads* possess,
Just Alamode equip the Men of Taste;
 Each struts as Bold, and mighty as a L—d,
 Either to gain a R—on, or a Cord,
 No matter which, they Greatness imitate,
 Curse Fortune then that gives 'em such a Fate;
 Ruin'd, to Jail each Man of Figure's sent,
 And Starving dies a weeping Penitent!
 Satire, look back! in Justice now declare
 What are the Foibles of the tender Fair:

Most have a Taste, and know at Twelve ('tis plain)
That Providence has no Thing made in vain;
 Tho' delicate! they've Senses to be pleas'd,
Know what they Want, and when that Want is eas'd:
 To be admir'd much Emulation shew,
 And smell the Verge of CUPID'S Dome below;
 The out-stretch'd Canvass spreads with cool Delight,
 And opens new Discoveries to our Sight;
 Soft latent Charms thick Folds no longer screen;
If th' Hoop excels, no matter what is seen!
 So may we hope, All Love has treasur'd there,
Will by degrees Invitingly Appear.
 At Church the Saint immers'd in Thoughts Divine,
 If chance he see those brilliant Beauties shine,
 The heavenly Visions transient fleet away;
 And Angels seem less lovely far than They!
 When strait the Nymph adorn'd looks round to see,
 If yet to her a Convert bends his Knee;
 Then by a Glance beholds him prostrate near,
 With Eyes directed not to Heaven but Her;
 Coyly the Goddess casts an awful Stare,
 And dies away with other Zeal than Prayer.
 O LOVE! A'mighty LOVE! whence none are free,
 Even all become Idolaters to thee;
 From lov'd ADONIS, Noble, Kind and Just,
 To hated SYPHAX, Trunk of canker'd Lust;
 Or shaking TIMON, wither'd, lame and old,
 The Man who hugs his Mistress as his Gold.
 Yet this is all mere venal low Offence,
 To some Degrees of Mens Concupiscence:

SODOM's curs'd Crew far worse than Beasts obscene,
 Devils incarnate to the Damn'd unclean;
 A vile detested Heterogeneous Race,
 Monsters! unfit to wear a Human Face.
 Fly! fly the foul abominable Creature,
 Worm of the Jakes, the fetid Sink of Nature!
 Say now in what the Wi—es and M—ons shine,
 In what Excel, and how Improve their Time;
Play, Scandal, Tea, the Toilet and the Bed;
 These an Employ by most for Life are made,
 In new Intrigue or what gives most Delight,
 They spend the Day, and game away the Night;
 Yet regular do all Punctilios keep,
 At Twelve to Supper, and at Four to Sleep;
 Thus gone to Rest and Day's long Drudgery done,
They ring at Ten and rise again at Noon.
 Others in soft lethargic Pleasures drown'd,
 Gently move on in one eternal Round!
 From Day to Day, but just repeat the same,
 Rise, Eat and Drink, undress and Sleep again;
 Except an *Opera*, or a *Masquerade*,
 Or else a *Sunday's* Visit 's to be paid:
 When some half wak'd devout to Church repair,
 And their free Off'ring at the Altar share:
 Next Home to Dress and Paint, and then away
 To hear some sweet *Italian* Music play;
 All this perform'd, have still an ardent Zeal,
 To spend the Night at *Ombre* or *Quadrille*.
 *** calls up three times a Day to Prayers,
 And at all other leisure Rails, or Swears;

Tells her Examples of OEconomy,
 And says no prudent Woman lives but She.
 SPIRUS and DELIA call their Priest a Fool,
 And turn all Sacred Things to Ridicule;
 The Priest demurely goes to Church to pray,
 Return'd, makes those a Jest as much as They;
 In Language that a *Turk* might blush to hear,
 Language might force from him a conscious Tear!
 With what Abhorrence wou'd his Hate be shew'd,
To those who mock the Worship of their GOD:
 Indignities like these were never shewn
 To senseless Deities of Wood or Stone;
 Even such vain Forms when the Adorers saw,
 As Gods preserv'd a venerable Awe!
 But here perverse th' ALMIGHTY's Works they scan,
 And free, alike dispute with GOD and Man.

Of Truth and Justice *** pretends to treat,
 Couch'd in a Leopard's Fawn for his Deceit;
 At Vice he rails, and sounds bright Virtue's Cause,
 Praises her Beauties, and defines her Laws;
 Yet trace his Life, and every Action shews,
None more of Vice, and less of Virtue knows.
 To what Design do Words or Actions tend,
 That persecute the Virtues they commend?
 But most Men now so Orthodox are grown,
Each has a new-made Worship of his own;
 Void of a Scripture-Rule, or GOD to please,
 Best form'd to his Convenience or his Ease:

Religion's

Religion's still the Subject of the Press,
Tho' sure no Christian Nation e'er had less!
 'T has been so long Disputed every Day,
 'Tis almost now Disputed quite away.
 In Morals too so very nice they're grown,
 They alter'd those we had, and left us None;
 Nay Principle and Honesty's the same,
 They're all refin'd to nothing but a Name:
 An honest Man appears so out of Rule,
 He seems at best a Madman or a Fool;
 Yet all can tell (by Reason to be sure)
 The Man is Honest, why? because he's Poor.
 Money's a Current, nothing can withstand,
 Still opening various Channels thro' the Land;
 If dribbling Ebbs with Opposition meet,
 The following Eddy crowds into a Deep,
 O'er every Bound pursues it's lawful course,
 And breaks it's Way with loud impetuous Force:
 As gathering Streams that drain the leaky Coast,
 Do Plow till in one mingl'd Torrent lost.
 All sublunary Things submit to Gold,
 JOVE governs now, not SATURN as of old!
 The Gods 'tis plain deceiv'd each ancient Sage,
 And meant that this shou'd be the Golden Age.
 Say then the Cause that brings our Mischiefs on,
 Why Man seems eager most to be Undone;
 His Thoughts like Atoms by the Whirlwinds tost,
 In all the airy maze of Passion lost!
 Thus, greatest Blessings sent us here below,
 If mis-apply'd, will bring the greatest Woe,

Are often chang'd from Best of Things to Worst;
 By Knowledge some, and some by Wealth are curs'd.
 If Heav'n gives Wealth, soon as that Wealth's bestow'd,
 Alas frail Man! it strait becomes his GOD;
 Capacious Joys within his Breast inspire
 All the fond Heart can Wish or Soul Desire;
 Except amid't his ever-growing Store,
 He pines out Life, and dies in want — of more.
 Corruption spreads, and Guilt so rules the Times,
 That Flattery, Fraud and Knavery, seem no Crimes:
 Most freely think their Business is Deceit,
 And Sense and Merit are — a *private Cheat*.
 All Men, they say, that have it in their Power,
 Will think the same, and shew it every Hour.
 It's Bite who can, and hark ye — in a Word,
The Cocker's Credit oft outbids the L—d;
 Whilst GOOSE the Taylor (bowing reverend low)
 In new-born Fashion struts a first-rate Beau,
 And much resembles some Long-Titled-Name,
 Whose Parts, whose Language, nay, whose Air's the same:
 One that perhaps (tho' rank'd with noble P——rs)
For Sense and Manners scarce deserves the Sheers.

Say, Satire, say! if now thou can't devise,
 Where are the Good! the Brave! the Just! the Wise!
 Whose worthy Praises, Truth and Virtue sound;
 Where are these Fathers of their Country found!
 Who nor our Follies, nor our Vices share,
 Nor act beneath the Dignity they bear.

Search! quickly search! if any such we have,
 And let the Good a sinking Nation save!
 Seek where ASTRÆA from the World retires,
 Where Gold corrupts not, nor Revenge inspires,
 Where Envy dies, Ambition sleeps in Peace,
 Self-Interest falls, and public Factions cease.
 'Tis done; behold thy darling P——r come forth,
 Great and admir'd among'st the Sons of Worth!
 Dupe to no Party, fix'd on neither Side,
But where plain Reason, Truth and Virtue guide;
 To Honour just, in Heart and Conscience clear,
 In Deeds impartial, and in Words sincere,
 Free from ill-grounded Hope or servile Fear.
 All these, amid'st the wiser Better Few,
 The World beholds, O L——, in You.

F I N I S.

